

Concept Note

Background

Africa has exploded into the technology economy over the last several years, thanks to the multiple advantages it has over other regions in developing a technology-based economy:

- ✓ The continent has the youngest population in the world, with a median age of 19.7; meaning that there is a large population of youth looking for a chance to break into the technology industry.
- ✓ With the continent's late entry into the global tech economy, it can learn from the earlier errors of global tech hubs.
- ✓ It is entering the digital market at an ideal time where it can take advantage of globalized internet technology, directly adopting and improving upon existing technologies, such as mobile money platforms – one of which was first developed in Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa will have more than 130 million new mobile subscribers by 2025, and 272 million Africans are currently connected to the internet through their phones. Tech Education is Booming: multiple universities in Africa now offer software engineering, computer science and other tech programs that compete with top universities around the world. Technology accelerators are rapidly growing too. Africa is building its own tech economy. Nairobi is home to Africa's "Silicon Savannah".

It is therefore evident that Africa is ripe for Digital Health Solutions, and that the COVID-19 pandemic has exponentially accelerated the need for E-Health; particularly for E-pharmacy, Tele-consulting, Tele-radiology and Tele-pathology platforms and E-Payment solutions, which are **all in infancy in the region**. **THUS THE DIGITAL DIVIDE!** Working with global innovation hubs and through partnership with leaders in this arena, Africa can thrive in its healthcare management and in promoting the vision of universal health coverage.

About the Session:

The session "Promoting Health Infrastructure in Africa: Bridging the Digital Divide" is an initiative of The USA Healthcare Alliance, convened by AHB, during which experts will zoom into all matters related to digital healthcare infrastructure. The session will be an open session in which key speakers from the technology, trade and healthcare/social impact industries will discuss the status and prospects of promoting health infrastructure in Africa.

The main discussion points will be centred on these thematic areas:

1. The central issues facing the African continent in the digital healthcare sphere and which products or initiatives are needed
2. Healthcare infrastructure projects in the region which can foster collaboration between US companies and African companies, government, or organizations
3. Actions attendees can take in order to involve themselves in these projects, and "bridge the digital divide".

The Panelists:

- ❖ Microsoft's Global Chief Medical Officer, **Dr. David Rhew** will be speaking of Microsoft's initiatives in the continent and the role they can continue to play in Africa. The Africa CDC, in collaboration with Microsoft and other partners, has launched the Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative in a US\$100 million, four-year partnership to expand access to next-generation genomic sequencing tools and expertise designed to strengthen public health surveillance and laboratory networks across Africa. Microsoft is also expanding access to affordable broadband for residents in Africa and other parts of the world through its *Airband* initiative.

- ❖ The BroadReach Group has spent the last 18 years working across emerging markets to improve large scale healthcare delivery and outcomes using technology and innovation. They are the creators of the award-winning Vantage technology platform. Built on the Microsoft Azure cloud and integrated into Microsoft teams, Vantage is a cloud based enterprise data, decision support and workflow population health platform that allows countries to harness the power of the data they have across multiple disparate systems. It transforms data into actionable insights and guides actors at every level of the health system to implement their tasks with fidelity according to local protocols and best practices. Vantage enables countries to do the most with their scarce resources by ensuring that every hour and every dollar is being spent in the most effective way possible and by improving program governance and accountability. BroadReach is a gold-level Microsoft global co-sell partner. We are excited to have **Dr. Ernest Darkoh-Ampem** speak on this panel on how big data approaches, analytics and technology enabled management solutions can transform healthcare delivery and improve outcomes in Africa.
- ❖ access.mobile has a background working deeply with both the private and public sector in African countries. After helping the Executive Clinic at the Nairobi Hospital reduce missed appointments by 84% and increase patient intake by 220%, access.mobile entered South Africa in 2019 in support of BroadReach's work in the USAID APACE Programme. Since the project began, access.mobile has innovated new data-pipeline processes while navigating an evolving regulatory landscape around informed consent, and the Covid-19 pandemic to successfully demonstrate improved patient return to care through intelligent mobile patient engagement. This work has directly impacted hundreds of thousands of people. In 2020, access.mobile expanded its Sub-Saharan footprint to support COVID response and digital transformation for a SADC Adolescent Reproductive Health, Rights, and Behaviour programme in Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. access.mobiles **Kaakpema Yelapaala** will impact the session with further anecdotes on bridging the digital divide in Africa and future initiatives.
- ❖ The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) is a U.S. Government foreign assistant agency focused on supporting commercial partnerships between U.S. providers of key technologies in healthcare, IT, and other sectors and local public and private sector project sponsors in Africa and around the globe. **Carl B. Kress**, Regional Director for North Africa and Co-Head of the agency's Healthcare Sector Team will be speaking on how USTDA's project planning tools and events can foster collaborations to expand access to quality healthcare in Africa.

Who better than **Professor Khama Rogo** of the African Institute for Healthcare Transformation (AIHT) to moderate such a gripping symposium? AIHT is a union between the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Division of Global Health and Human Rights, the Kenyan medical institutions of Sagam Community Hospital (SCH), and the Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (KMET). Through this partnership, AIHT aims to expand the availability of healthcare equipment, training, and experience across nations in need. AIHT specifically looks to areas with limited natural resources and limited access to large cities or institutions. AIHT boasts AIHTSagam: the African Innovative Health Transformation Medical Knowledge HUB

The USA Healthcare Alliances (**USAHA**), co-host of the symposium with Africa Healthcare Federation, has a mission to expand overseas export opportunities for US companies through **identifying, qualifying, and executing** health infrastructure projects. USAHA has sponsored this informative symposium to create awareness of the current state of health infrastructure in Africa and to provide a platform for fruitful discussions on available partnerships and projects to leverage and scale health infrastructure for Africa. USAHA has key, official partnerships with the US Government, including US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), US Department of Commerce and ExIm Bank.

The Africa Healthcare Federation (**AHF**), also co-hosting the symposium, offers the private sector voice for Africa, creating solutions that address market challenges, but also harnessing private sector potential to accelerate achievement of universal health coverage. With membership from all regions in Africa, it provides an influential audience for the broad-based deliberations and opportunities in the symposium.